

Washington State Patrol Media Release

Chief Ronal W. Serpas



Office of the State Fire Marshal *State Fire Marshal Mary Corso*

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State Fire Marshal Urges Public to Celebrate Safely

Chief Ronal W. Serpas announced today that with retail fireworks stands opening across the state on June 28, the Washington State Fire Marshal is asking citizens to "Celebrate Safely."

There is much that can be done to protect children and the public from fireworks injuries, says State Fire Marshal Mary Corso who offers the following: "First, set family boundaries—only adults should light fireworks. In 2002, 231 fireworks incidents were reported to the State Fire Marshal, with 18% percent of these incidents having no adult supervision. In addition, 136 injuries were reported, of which 63 were children under the age of 17. Supervision is paramount in keeping children safe. Second, fireworks should not be readily available to tempt the curiosity of young children and should be stored in a secured location to prohibit their access. Third, check with your local fire department for additional restrictions in your area. Most importantly, talk about safety. Summer weather conditions make grasses and other vegetation dry and vulnerable to fire. Use care in selecting the area where you will be discharging fireworks."

Don't wait—talk to your kids about fireworks and safety. Educate every member of your family about the following 3 B's:

BEFORE LIGHTING FIREWORKS—"Be Prepared!"

Purchase only legal fireworks, available at licensed stands. Purchase only the quantity that you will use. Ensure the safety of pets. Keep a bucket of water nearby in which to place all used fireworks. Have a water hose or fire extinguisher nearby to put out stray sparks. Clear a level area away from things that can burn. Know the emergency number to call for your area, your address/location, and basic first aid. Teach your children to "stop, drop, and roll" if their clothes catch on fire.

WHEN LIGHTING FIREWORKS—"Be Safe!"

Only adults should light fireworks. Use eye protection, wear safety goggles. Light one at a time and move away quickly. Keep spectators at a safe distance. Use only outdoors, away from anything that can burn. To prevent injuries, follow the directions on the label carefully. Be considerate of your neighbors, family pets, and your environment.

WHEN FINISHED — "Be Responsible!"

Clean up all debris when finished. Duds can be dangerous; if a fireworks item does not light or fire, an adult should wait at least five minutes, approach it carefully, and place it in a bucket of water. Make sure unused fireworks, matches, and lighters are out of sight and reach of children.

Independence Day is a time to celebrate our freedoms. Please, "**Be Prepared,**" "**Be Safe,**" and "**Be Responsible**" when using fireworks. To learn about a community fireworks display

near you, contact the fireworks community event line at 1-888-29July4 or visit our Web site at www.wsp.wa.gov, then click on the 4th Celebrate Safely icon.

For more information, contact your local fire department or the Office of the State Fire Marshal at (360) 753-0400.

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